

First organization of colored troops in the state of New York, to aid in suppressing the slave-holders' rebellion. Statements concerning the origin, difficulties and success of the movement

FIRST ORGANIZATION OF COLORED TROOPS IN THE STATE OF NEW YORK, TO AID IN SUPPRESSING THE SLAVEHOLDERS' REBELLION.

Statements concerning the Origin, Difficulties and Success of the Movement: INCLUDING OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS, MILITARY TESTIMONIALS, PROCEEDINGS OF THE "UNION LEAGUE CLUB," ETC.:—
Collated for the "New York Association for Colored Volunteers," BY HENRY O'RIELLY, SECRETARY.

NEW YORK, March, 1864.

NOW AND THEN.

"There has been no more striking manifestation of the marvelous times that are upon us than the scene in our streets at the departure of the first of our Colored Regiments. Had any man predicted it last year, he would have been thought a fool, even by the wisest and most discerning. History abounds with strange contrasts. It always has been an ever-shifting melo-drama; but never, in this land at least, has it presented a transition so extreme, AND YET SO SPEEDY, as what our eyes have just beheld." * * * * "It is only by such occasions that we can at all realize the prodigious revolution which the public mind everywhere is experiencing. Such developments are infallible tokens of a new epoch."—New York Times.

"The ovation to the Twentieth Regiment of Colored Volunteers was one of the most imposing receptions which has ever honored the advent or departure of a military organization from New York."—New York Evening Express.

"Such testimonials must be peculiarly gratifying to all loyal people who have encouraged the organization of Colored Troops in this State—to one of the regiments of which (the 20th) a stand of colors will be presented this day at Union Square, near where sundry sable citizens were massacred last summer, for the crime, in Copperhead eyes, of appearing in the color bestowed by the Almighty." * * * "Nothing in the whole course of the great Rebellion is more remarkable than the manner in which the Colored race has falsified the assertions of the Secessionists and their Copperhead sympathizers." — New York Tribune.

NEW YORK: BAKER & GODWIN, PRINTERS, PRINTING-HOUSE SQUARE, OPPOSITE CITY HALL.

1864.

INTRODUCTORY.

The enlistment of Colored Troops in the United States, as a consequence of the “military necessity” that caused the emancipation of their race in this country, forms such an important feature in the Policy of our National Government and in the History of the World, that the facts concerning that movement in the State of New York may be appropriately preserved, as a portion of the General History of this great War of National Defence against the “Slaveholder’ Rebellion.”

Hence this compilation of facts and documents—important not only in reference to the *number* of Colored Troops already sent or that may be sent from this or any other Northern State, but as *a popular indorsement of the policy* of arming for public defence a class of men whose bravery on sundry battle-fields, contrasting strongly with their recent slavish position, has signally proven their capacity for defending the Government that has now at last recognized their title to the immunities of freedom.

The magnitude of these events, for all time as well as for the present crisis, may well justify the *New York Times* in declaring, concerning the “Ovation to the Black Regiment,” that

“There has been no more striking manifestation of the marvelous times that are upon us than the scene in our streets at the departure of the first of our colored regiments. Had any man predicted it last year he would have been thought a fool, even by the wisest and most discerning. History abounds with strange contrasts. It always has been an ever-shifting melo-drama. But never, in this land at least, has it presented a transition so extreme and yet so speedy as what our eyes have just beheld.

“Eight months ago the African race in this city were literally hunted down like wild beasts. They fled for their lives. When caught, they were shot down like wild beasts. They fled for their lives. When caught, they were shot down in cold blood, or stoned to death, or hung to the trees or the lamp-posts. Their houses were pillaged; the asylum which Christian charity had provided for their orphan children was burned; and there was no limit to the persecution but in the physical impossibility of finding further material on which the mob could wreak its ruthless hate. Nor was it solely the raging horde in the streets that visited upon the black man the nefarious wrong. Thousands and tens of thousands of men of higher social grade, of better education, cherished precisely the same spirit.

It found expression in contumelious speech rather than in the violent act, but it was persecution none the less for that. In fact, the mob would never have entered upon that career of outrage but for the fact that it was fired and maddened by the prejudice which had been generated by the ruling influences, civil and social, here in New York, till it had enveloped the city like some infernal atmosphere. The physical outrages which were inflicted on the black race in those terrible days were but the outburst of malignant agencies which had been transfusing the whole community from top to bottom, year after year.

"How astonishingly has all this been changed! The same men, who could not have shown themselves in the most obscure street in the city without peril of instant death, even though in the most suppliant attitude, now march in solid platoons, with shouldered muskets, slung knapsacks, and buckled cartridge-boxes, down through our gayest avenues and our busiest thoroughfares to the pealing strains of martial music, and are everywhere saluted with waving handkerchiefs, with descending flowers, and with the acclamations and plaudits of countless beholders. They are halted at our most beautiful square, and amid an admiring crowd, in the presence of many of our most prominent citizens, are addressed in an eloquent and most complimentary speech by the President of our chief literary institution, and are presented with a gorgeous stand of colors in the name of a large number of the first ladies of the city, who attest on parchment, signed by their own fair hands, that they 'will anxiously watch your career, glorying in your heroism, ministering to you when wounded and ill, and honoring your martyrdom with benedictions and with tears.'

"It is only by such occasions that we can at all realize the prodigious revolution which the public mind everywhere is experiencing. Such developments are infallible tokens of a new epoch."

FIRST ORGANIZATION OF COLORED TROOPS IN THE STATE OF NEW YORK, TO AID IN SUPPRESSING THE SLAVEHOLDERS' REBELLION.

STATEMENTS CONCERNING THE ORIGIN, DIFFICULTIES & SUCCESS OF THE MOVEMENT: Collated for the "New York Association for Colored Volunteers," By HENRY O'RIELLY, Secretary.

New York, March, 1864.

The movements which finally resulted in the organization of Colored Troops in the State of New York were preceded by efforts on the part of sundry patriotic citizens, which are deserving of remembrance as a part of the history of the times.

At a public meeting in the City of New York, called by sundry well-known loyalists, "to take measures for securing the enlistment of Colored Volunteers," a Committee was, on the 3d of May, 1863, appointed to wait upon the President of the United States, to ascertain what facilities would be extended by the National Government towards the organization of such troops in the State of New York. The Committee consisted of Messrs. Edward Gilbert, Dexter Fairbanks, James Fairman, and Lewis Francis.

This Committee obtained an interview with President Lincoln on the 9th of June, and on that occasion presented the following Memorial:

To His Excellency, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States:

Extensive observation and inquiry among the colored population of the Free States have convinced your memorialists of the patriotism and devotion of this portion of our fellow-citizens, and of their willingness to bear their full share of the burdens, dangers, and privations of the war against the rebellion. They are willing to volunteer for the service, upon the requisite assurance that they will be placed under leaders in sympathy with the movement. Indeed, such is their intense enthusiasm and patriotism, that if the assurance can be given them, that upon their enlistment they will be in active service under the command of Major-General John C. Fremont, your memorialists are confident that a force of at least 10,000 could be placed under enlistment within sixty days, forming a Grand Army of Liberation, swelling in numbers as they pass along, thus giving effectiveness to the Proclamation of January, 1863.

Pledges of enlistment, conditioned upon these assurances being given, have already been obtained to the number of 3,000 names.

Your memorialists, therefore, respectfully petition your Excellency to place John C. Fremont in a suitable command, and accept the 10,000 troops offered as above, and that the necessary orders may be issued to secure the organization and mustering of the troops into the service of the United States; that a rendezvous be named and instructions given to the local military agents of the United States to furnish the materials and facilities required for these purposes.

(Signed)

JOHN E. WILLIAMS,

HORACE GREELEY,
DANL. S. DICKINSON,
EDWARD HAIGHT,
EDGAR KETCHUM,
HENRY C. GARDINER,
WM. CULLEN BRYANT,
WM. CURTIS NOYES,
PETER COOPER,
MORRIS KETCHUM,
PARKE GODWIN,
EDWARD A. STANSBURY,
HOSMER BUSHNELL.

The friends of the movement held a meeting in the Church of the Puritans, in New York, when the following opinions were expressed:

Resolved, That it is the conviction of this meeting that, in view of the cause, origin and progress of the Rebellion in our land, the time has arrived when the dictates of justice, humanity and expediency unite in admonishing us to encourage and labor to obtain a general arming of the Loyal Men of the Union, without reference to *color*, as a means calculated to accomplish the greatest good, in the best manner, to our beloved country, in this, the hour of her trial.

2

Resolved, That considerations of humanity, as well as effectiveness, warrant us in declaring that we regard the military co-operation of the emancipated Slaves of the South as a means which will secure the earliest triumph to our country in its contest with Slavery in Rebellion, as well as give the best guarantee of permanent security and peace in the future.

Resolved, That, as an instrumentality to this end, we view the organization of a large force of Colored Volunteers from the Loyal States, *under the command of leaders in sympathy with the movement*, as calculated to improve confidence and secure co-operation in a degree which we can attach to no other available agency, and therefore should be encouraged by the practical action of the Government.

Resolved, That we consider it to be the duty of every true citizen and soldier of the Republic to facilitate such a movement with every energy they possess, that the vast conspiracy against the life and liberties of our country—too extensive in crime for the functions of the common hangman—may receive its death-blow from the hands they seek to enslave.

Resolved, That in view of the red page of our history, written in the blood of a heroic people in the recent conflict at Port Hudson, it needs no asseveration on our part to prove that the black man will fight.

Resolved, That we here pledge our best efforts to give complete and speedy success to the scheme presented to the Government by our deputation, and we will look with impatient zeal to the Government for the word that will speak an immense army into existence, and give a significance to the President's Proclamation of January, 1863, that will inspire with energy and hope the heart of every true friend of our country.

The President's Reply.

The reply of President Lincoln to the above-named Committee, after referring to a proposed command for Gen. Fremont, was substantially to this effect:—

That, AS GOV. SEYMOUR IS GOVERNOR OF A LOYAL STATE, the National Government declined to act in reference to Colored enlistments in that State, UNTIL IT COULD BE SHOWN THAT GOV. SEYMOUR, under his own signature, REFUSED TO ENCOURAGE VOLUNTEERING IN THAT WAY.

First and Second Applications to Gov. Seymour.

A memorial to the Governor of the State of New York, in reference to the proposed organization of Colored Troops, as a part of the quota of the State for reinforcing the armies in the field, was sent about the same time to Governor Seymour. To this respectful application, no reply was received.

But, persevering in the object, the Committee sent another copy of the request for authority to organize a brigade of Colored Volunteers,—to be commanded by "*any other person*," who might

be selected by the Governor, if the officer named by the memorialists was not acceptable to his Excellency, as stated in the letter of Mr. Lewis Francis, of August 13th. These papers were in the following terms:

New York City, July 9, 1863.

To His Excellency Horatio Seymour, Governor of the State of New York.

The undersigned would respectfully ask your Excellency to appoint Colonel James Fairman a Colonel, for the purpose of raising a brigade of Colored Volunteers for the war, knowing him to be a man every way qualified for the purpose, from his "record" at Washington, he having raised the 96th Regiment N. Y. V., at Plattsburg, and resigned, on account of ill health, from injuries received in the field.

Respectfully yours,

JAS. BLACK, 92 William Street.

THOS. J. HALL, 71 East 16th Street.

J. W. ALDEN, 104 William Street.

CHAS. SULLIVAN, 54 Beekman Street.

FRANK W. BALLARD, 100 Broadway.

F. H. JENNY, 95 East 15th Street.

EDWARD GILBERT.

LEWIS FRANCIS, 45 Maiden Lane.

BRADHURST SCHIEFFELIN, 170 William Street.

[The JULY RIOTS, with their horrors, indicated some of the schemes and difficulties which at that time opposed the enlistment of loyal Colored Volunteers, and, indeed, of soldiers of any kind for the National Defence.]

New York, August 13, 1863.

To His Excellency Horatio Seymour, Governor of the State of New York.

Sir: In presenting this petition, I would say that I have given the subject some considerable attention, and have no doubt that if Colonel James Fairman, *or any other person known to be in sympathy with the movement of using Colored Troops* in the suppression of the Rebellion, be appointed by you to recruit such troops, at least four thousand Colored Volunteers can be raised in this State, thereby saving that number of white citizens from the draft.

If facilities are not offered them to enlist in this State, they will go to neighboring ones, and will be lost in the quota as New York State troops.

Since the Government's guarantee of protection to colored soldiers, they are rapidly enlisting in other States, from New York.

I sent you a similar petition about two months since, and having received no answer, I beg you will favor me with a reply to this, as great efforts have been made to prepare our colored citizens, and I think good to the nation will result from the measure.

Very respectfully, LEWIS FRANCIS, 45 *Maiden Lane*.

But, even to these repeated respectful appeals, no reply was received from Governor Seymour.

Letter from the Solicitor of the War Department.

While waiting in suspense for authority from the Governor to raise Colored Troops to be credited as a part of the quota of this State, the friends of the movement were cheered by hearty responses from sundry quarters—of which the following reply to an invitation to attend a convention at Poughkeepsie, for promoting the organization of Colored Volunteers, may be taken as a specimen—the high personal character of the writer adding importance to the prominent position he occupies under the National Government. It is understood that, in this letter, the writer expressed the general views of President Lincoln:

Letter of the Hon. William Whiting, Solicitor to the War Department.

War Department, Washington City, July 10, 1863.

Dear Sir: —Your letter, under date of July, has been received, in which you have done me the honor to invite me, on behalf of the Fremont Legion, to address the grand Mass Convention of Colored Citizens, to be held at Poughkeepsie on the 15th and 16th instant, and in which you desire me to answer certain inquiries in relation to troops of African descent. Other engagements render it impossible for me to be present on that occasion, but I avail myself of this opportunity of expressing my respect and sympathy for those who now, for the first time within the present century, have determined to vindicate their right to be treated as patriots,—sharing in the toils, dangers and sacrifices of that great nation of which they constitute so important a part.

Courage, endurance, and disinterested heroism are qualities of all brave men, whatever may be their lineage. No names yet stand upon the roll of honor more brilliant or illustrious than those of Hannibal and Touissant L'Overture. Give to those Americans, who claim as their fatherland the continent that gave birth to the conqueror of Rome, the arms and discipline of the well-trained soldier, and they will give back to the cause of the country all the elements of military power. Such is the teaching of history—such the testimony of experience.

What has the Africo-American to fight for? He fights for that land which, now about to be freed from the curse of slavery, will be to him "his country." In rallying round the flag of the Union, he adds strength and support to the noble armies of the West and of the East, who, on the fields of Vicksburg and Gettysburg, have added fresh laurels to their imperishable fame.

Not alone for his country's honor, not for empire, not for conquest, not alone for the crushing of Rebellion, is the African's blade unsheathed. He fights for the honor and manhood of his race, for justice, humanity, and freedom. When love of country and of fame, when thirst for justice and a sense of wrongs yet unavenged, shall nerve the arm and fire the blood already kindled by the flames of freedom, how is it possible that the soldier can be otherwise than brave and terrible in battle, when slavery and death are behind him, and life and liberty lie only in the path to victory? Let history answer this question. Read your answer in the bloody battles of the Revolution, where negro 4 soldiers bore a part so noble that General Washington, publicly and at the head of his army, acknowledged their gallantry. Remember the honor paid by General Jackson to the heroic regiment of colored men who aided in the defense of New Orleans. Let the battles on the Atlantic coast and the storming of forts on the Mississippi answer. Their bravery recalls the memory of the world-renowned battle of Marathon, in which one-tenth of those who fought and won imperishable honor were slaves "unchained from the doorposts of their masters."

Will the colored men respond to the invitation of the Government?

They are now springing up like dragon's teeth, from the soil into which they have been crushed. Masters of the ground they tread upon, they are sweeping forward in steady, solid legions. Forty thousand strong are already in the service. They are destined to wield the sword of just retribution,—to teach their former masters, on many a bloody battle-field, by many a rout and swift pursuit, which of them is “of the superior race.”

The military organization of Colored Troops, removing all danger of insurrectionary movements, will regulate, control and utilize the physical force of the only “genuine Union men” in the Gulf States. *The greatest war power of treason will become the most efficient defense of the Union, and while it will smother rebellion, it will destroy the curse that caused it.*

On the 22d of May, the War Department issued a General Order (No. 143) establishing a bureau in the Adjutant-General's office for the organization of Colored Regiments, whereby the system of employing them as part of the forces of the United States has become the fixed and permanent policy of the Government. That policy, sanctioned by Congress, carried into practical effect by the Government, has been approved by the general consent of wise and patriotic men. The country cannot afford to lose the aid of its best and chief supporters in the South.

The employment of Colored Troops, it is true, was in the beginning experimental. The law of 1862, which first authorized them to enter the service, provided no means of payment.

The second law, which permitted their employment, authorized them to be paid ten dollars per month and one ration per day. This law was, however, made with reference to those who by force of arms, or by provisions of statutes, had been recently freed from bondage.

The important class of colored soldiers from the Free States were probably not in the contemplation of Congress when framing these Acts. But now, while colored men are admitted to be citizens of several of the Northern States and of the United States, and since the Conscription Act makes no distinction between white and colored citizens, but requires them equally to be enrolled and drafted in the forces of the United States, there seems to be no reason why such citizens should not, when volunteering to serve the country, be placed upon the same footing with other soldiers as regards their pay and bounty.

The attention of Congress will be directed to this subject, and from the generous manner in which they have treated the soldiers heretofore, it cannot be doubted that they will honor themselves by doing full justice to those of every color, who rally round the Union flag in time of public danger.

But I do not forget that the colored soldiers are not fighting for pay. They will not let their enemies reproach them with being mean, as well as cowardly. They will not lose this, their first chance, to vindicate their right to be called and treated as men. Pay or no pay, they will rally round that banner of freedom *which shall soon float over a country that contains no slave within its borders.*

The policy of the Government is *fixed* and immovable. Congress has passed the irrevocable Acts of Emancipation. The Supreme Court of the United States have unanimously decided that, since July 13, 1861, we have been engaged in a territorial civil war, and have full belligerent rights against the inhabitants of the rebellious districts. The President has issued proclamations under his hand and seal. *Abraham Lincoln takes no backward step.* A man once made free by law cannot be again made a slave. The Government has no power, if it had the will, to do it. Omnipotence alone can re-enslave a freeman. Fear not that the Administration will ever take the back track. The President wishes the aid of all Americans, of whatever descent or color, to defend the country. He wishes every citizen to share the perils of the contest, and to reap the fruits of victory.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant, WILLIAM WHITING.

Edward Gilbert, Esq., New York City.

5

Further Appeals to Gov. Seymour.

Resolved to persevere, notwithstanding the non-reception of reply to their former appeals to the State Executive, the friends of the movement again deputed a committee to address the Governor personally. For this purpose, Mr. Requa, of Albany, called upon His Excellency again in October, when a brief letter was elicited, which letter will be found embodied in the comments which the *New York Evening Post* made upon the subject. The entire article from that journal is here inserted, as a contemporaneous view of the course pursued by the memorialists and by the Governor:

From the New York Evening Post, Oct. 14, 1863.

"In June last several gentlemen in this city, wishing to help in filling up our armies, took measures for raising several Negro Regiments. They sent a number of agents through the State to inquire into the disposition of the colored people, and ascertain the number who would probably enlist. The reports of these agents showed that at that time about five thousand colored men could have been mustered in. This would have made an important addition to the State's quota of troops. The persons in question therefore applied to Governor Seymour to authorize an effort to raise a negro brigade. This application was made as long ago as the 9th of July, and we have before us the

Governor's answer, dated October 7th; so that three months, less two days, were required by him to make up his mind whether or not he should authorize the addition to the armies of the Union of at least one full brigade of able-bodied soldiers. This would not only have benefited the cause to that extent, but would have placed just so many thousand men to the credit of the State, to the relief of that number of white citizens from draft.

"After ninety days of delay and evasion, the Governor was at last brought to bay by the persistence of the gentleman who was charged with soliciting his consent, and wrote the following reply:

"State of New York Executive Department, Albany, October 7th, 1863.

"Mr. Requa has called upon me *a number of times* with your request that an authorization be given to Colonel James Fairman to raise a Negro Regiment.

"I do not deem it advisable to give such authorization, and I have therefore declined to do it.

Truly yours, &c., "Horatio Seymour.

"To Messrs. E. Gilbert, L. Francis, and others.'

"In a letter of Mr. Requa he adds: 'In my interviews with the Governor, in company with others, he expressed, in the most unequivocal manner, his disapproval of the system of raising negro regiments to aid in putting down the rebellion, both as a matter of principle and policy—especially so in the northern States.'

"The armies of the Union need to be filled up; Governor Seymour's friends resist a draft, and he does not discourage them in their opposition. There is a source whence several thousand able-bodied men can be got; the Governor is asked to authorize the raising of these men, to be counted in the State's quota; and he refuses. What are we to think? Has he changed his mind about the draft? Does he want to force on another draft? Does he really think black men so much better than white men that the latter ought to be sent to the war, while the negroes are kept safely at home? Else, why does Governor Seymour make himself the special protector of the blacks? Is it that he intends, by all means in his power, to prevent volunteering, and make another draft necessary? or is it that he desires the Union armies to be deprived of needed reinforcements, and leave them at the mercy of superior rebel numbers?

"The people of the State want to know the Governor's intentions towards their brothers and sons now in the army, and he ought to explain himself; for it is not pleasant to think that he is playing a

treacherous part towards them, and abandoning them to the tender mercies of men in revolt against the nation.

"In the meantime, we will point out to the people this fact, that other States, whose Governors are more careful of the interests of the citizens, and more zealous for the Union cause, are profiting at our expense, through the policy of Governor Seymour. While the Governor was delaying his answer, and endeavouring by all manner of pleas to avoid committing himself upon the question—in these ninety-days of his deliberation not less than six hundred able-bodied colored men left the State and enlisted in Rhode Island. In the same period some four hundred more left here and entered regiments 6 in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania. Thus we have already lost a full regiment through the inefficiency or perversity of the Governor—a full regiment, which would have been counted in the quota of the State. What do the people of New York think of this? Governor Seymour may not be able to do much to aid his rebel friends and former political allies, but he does what he can. During the last canvass he blew hot and cold on the question of Union; promised Fernando Wood and his followers to oppose the war, and engaged himself to Loyal Democrats to support it. We warned the people then that he would be true only to the peace and pro-slavery wing of his supporters, and he has proved our words true to the extent of his abilities."

Thus much for the editorial statements of the New York *Evening Post*.

In connection with the long-continued perseverance of the above-named Committee, in endeavoring, through several months, to ascertain *distinctly* what Governor Seymour's views were on the important subject of enlisting Colored Volunteers, it should be recollected that *an explicit declaration of his policy* was deemed proper by the National Government as a condition precedent to any action on the subject in the State of New York by the President or Secretary of War; for, in June, President Lincoln declared to that Committee, substantially, "That, as Governor Seymour is Governor of a Loyal State, the National Government declined to act in reference to Colored Enlistments in that State, until it could be shown that Governor Seymour, under his own signature, refused to encourage volunteering in that way." Gov. Seymour, after repeated applications for months, finally stated, in his letter of October 7th, above printed, that he did "not deem it advisable to give such authorizations" (for raising a Negro regiment), "and therefore declined to do it."

The Association for Promoting Colored Volunteering.

Such was the state of the case, when the emergencies of the times occasioned the issue of the following Address to the People of New York—among the signatures to which will be recognized those of many prominent citizens:—

To the People of New York.

New York, November 9, 1863.

Fellow Citizens: —New York State has but a few weeks within which to raise her quota of over one hundred thousand men by volunteering.

If we allow our citizens to be drawn away by superior inducements offered by other States, we lose them in making up our quota, and the draft will fall heavily upon those who are left. Or, if we raise the men by volunteering at the last hour, we shall have to pay larger bounties and heavier taxes.

Let us move in this matter without delay. Other States are fast taking our men to fill their quotas, especially our colored men. Several thousands of these may be added to the strength of our army, and also saved to the quota of our State, by a prompt and vigorous movement. Our country's interest and self-interest here unite.

All who are in favor of supporting the Government and preserving the interests and honor of our State, are invited to attend a Preliminary Meeting at Room No. 5 Clinton Hall, at 8 o'clock on Monday evening, November 16, 1863, to take measures for immediate practical action.

Peter Cooper,

Maj-General Daniel E. Sickles, U. S. Vols.

Morris Ketchum,

Wm. Curtis Noyes,

Fred. S. Talmadge,

John Cochrane,

William E. Dodge,

Israel Corse,

David Dudley Field,

Geo. Cabot Ward,

Wm. C. Bryant,
James McKaye,
H. J. Raymond,
Herman Raster,
Hugh Allen,
F. F. Thompson,
Henry W. Bellows,
Dr. Charles Kessman,
Charles Sears,
Sydney Howard Gay,
Theodore Tilton,
J. Thompson,
C. E. Detmold,
Parke Godwin,
Hiram Barney,
Frederick Kapp,
R. H. Manning,
P. T. Barnum,
James Kelly,
A. M. Palmer,

Benj. F. Lee,
Edward Cromwell,
W. H. Gedney,
Frederic Sherwood,
Lewis Roberts,
Josiah M. Fiske,
Alfred M. Hugh,
G. H. Roberts,
J. B. Herrick,
Henry Rawles,
Henry Hill,
Jas. O. Bennett,
John J. Herrick,
Paul Grout,
Wm. A. Brown,
David Dows,
David Packer,
E. A. Packer,
C. P. Bronson,
J. W. B. Smith,

Henry Kimball,
Wm. Hunt,
J. W. Haff,
G. Gay,
W. S. Stover,
J. K. Ingalls,
M. Esterly,
Robert T. Shannon,
N. Munday,
John Holden,
H. Williams,
Geo. W. Rose,
E. M. Young,
Jackson S. Schults,
S. Isham,
Clark Orvis.

7

The results of this call are briefly stated in the accounts given by several of the newspapers—one of which statements is here quoted:

From the New York Tribune, of November 17 th, 1863.

Important Meeting to Encourage Enlistments.

A numerous and influential meeting for the above purpose was held, pursuant to the call of a large number of our most prominent citizens, at Clinton Hall, last evening. There was a good attendance, and the proceedings were entirely harmonious. Gen. W. K. Strong, being unanimously called to the chair, read the preamble and resolutions setting forth the purpose of the organization, of which this meeting was the first step, to strengthen the military power both by white and colored soldiers of the Government; to secure justice to all who enlist; to inform them of their duties and rights as soldiers, and to make the men, white or black, feel that they were backed up by friends at home. These objects would be carried out by a committee of twenty-five. As Governor Seymour had refused to authorize colored enlistments, a sub-committee was to wait upon the President to endeavor to induce him to take action in the premises. A mas meeting was to be held at as early a day as such could be arranged. The money received by the Government for commutation under the draft ought, or a part of it, to be expended in bounties. A committee of lawyers was to be formed to consult as to the extent of the power of the Government in relation to enlisting negroes. Free drill rooms were to be established in the city, &c. All the foregoing was embodied in the resolutions which were unanimously passed by the meeting. Pending their adoption, General Strong made a vigorous and eloquent speech. He was in Egypt when the war broke out, being then in the first year of a three years' visit to the various countries of Europe—a visit undertaken for the express purpose of comparing their Governments with our own. In no case had he found a people whose condition, Government, institutions, and opportunities were equal to those of America. The General drew a vivid picture of the benighted condition of Egypt when the news of the Rebellion reached him, and he felt indignant beyond expression that the land which he had left peaceful and prosperous should be desolated by this wicked treason, which originated in oppressions and wrongs the most foul that the world ever saw. The framers of the Constitution intended it to be one of equal rights—they did not foresee the evils that have arisen since, or if they did, they thought the remedy might be left to the wisdom and patriotism of their posterity. It has pleased God to give to this generation the work of cutting up by the roots this gigantic and accursed crime. There must be no virus left to breed new rebellions. Believing that his mission in the West was over, no considerable force being massed west of the Mississippi, and that the murderers and house-burners would soon be disposed of, he had come home to aid in putting down Copperhead treason in this city.

The General was followed by Adjutant Haggerty, who has been to the war with a New York Regiment, and who made an extremely glowing and patriotic speech, denouncing the action of Governor Seymour, and claiming that the Bradys and the Meaghers should be regarded as the representative men of the Irish population, and that colored men should be allowed to enlist. His remarks were much applauded.

He was followed by the Rev. H. H. Garnett, who said that, as a class, colored men were most anxious to do their utmost to put down the Rebellion. Mr. Garnett gave a description of the unavailing efforts of the negroes to be employed as soldiers of New York, and alluded, in forcible terms, to the fact that they are leaving the city to enlist in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Connecticut, where they are not only appreciated, but offered large bounties and equal rights with white soldiers.

Some further remarks were made by Colonel Shannon, Henry O'Rielly, and others, when the committee of twenty-five, of which Peter Cooper was elected President, was appointed. The meeting, which was very enthusiastic throughout, did not adjourn until a late hour.

The General Committee, appointed to promote the above-mentioned objects, proceeded promptly and energetically in the work—as shown in the following statements:

From the Times, Tribune, and Herald of Nov. 26, 1863.

Course of the National and State Authorities Concerning Colored Volunteers—Letters from Governor Seymour and Secretary Stanton.

The “New York Association for Colored Volunteers,” formed at a meeting called by Peter Cooper, General Sickles, Wm. C. Bryant, General John Cochrane, Henry J. Raymond, Wm. Curtis Noyes, Wm. E. Dodge, David Dows, David Dudley Field, and many other citizens—of which meeting General Wm. K. Strong, late of the army, was president—took prompt measures for ascertaining the views of the National and State Governments concerning the conditions on which Colored Troops might be enlisted under the President's Proclamation for more volunteers. General Strong was requested to telegraph the War Department, and Mr. James Rodgers went to Albany to learn the views of Governor Seymour on the subject.

The callers of the meeting said: “If we allow our citizens to be drawn away by superior inducements offered by other States, we lose them in making up our quota, and the draft will fall heavily upon those who are left; or, if we raise men by volunteering at the last hour, we shall have to pay large bounties and heavier taxes. Let us move in this matter without delay. Other States are fast taking our men to fill their quotas—especially our colored men. Several thousand of these may be added to the strength of our army, and also *saved to the quota of our State*, by a prompt and vigorous movement. Our country's interest and self-interest here unite.”

The General Committee of the Association, in their letter to Secretary Stanton, dated Nov. 21, said: “This application to the National Government results from the refusal of certain State functionaries to recognize *colored* men in the call for *volunteers*, notwithstanding the fact that the President's

Proclamation makes no discrimination in color, and the additional fact that that class of citizens are subject, like white men, to *a draft*.

And in their representations at Albany it was added that “justice and patriotism alike require that all men who are subject to draft shall have equal privilege in volunteering under the President's Proclamation”—it being desirable, also, “that our white fellow-citizens shall be measurably relieved from drafting by allowing colored citizens to volunteer for the war—in the course of which war the colored troops have evinced discipline and bravery worthy of the noble cause of national self-defense.”

Answers have been received from Washington and Albany. Under date of the 24th, the Secretary of War says: “On application, by suitable persons, special authority will be granted to raise Colored Troops in New York, according to the rules and regulations relative to organizing and raising Colored Troops. The troops so raised *will be credited to the State*. Until Congress shall authorize it no bounty can be paid, and the pay is limited by Act of Congress to ten dollars a month. The department will recommend that, in this respect, the Act be amended so as to make the pay the same as for other colored soldiers. They will be enrolled as *United States Volunteers*, and the officers be appointed and commissioned by the President. (Signed Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War.)”

Governor Seymour replies thus to the inquiry made through Mr. Rodgers:—

“ State of New York Executive Department, Albany, Nov. 24, 1863.

“ To James Rodgers, Esq., No. 421 *Broadway*, N. Y.

“ Sir: In answer to your inquiries about the enlistment of Blacks, and the organization of regiments and companies, I have to say:

“ *First* — That, under the State laws the bounty is paid to all, without distinction, who are mustered into the service of the United States, and for whom credits are given to New York, under the President's call for troops.

“ *Second*, — As to new organizations, I have no power to authorize any, either for blacks or whites, which will be entitled to the benefit of the bounty given by the General Government. The object at Washington is to fill up the ranks of the regiments in the field. If any new organizations, for either white or black troops, are made, they *must be authorized by the War Department*, to entitle those who join them to the benefit of the money paid to volunteers.

Yours, &c., " Horatio Seymour. "

These answers are published for the information of the Association and all others interested, and the co-operation of all loyal citizens is earnestly invoked in furtherance of the objects above-mentioned.

By order of the General Committee, HENRY O'RIELLY, Secretary.

Rooms of the Association, No. 26 Pine Street, Nov. 25, 1863.

It will be seen by the above letter of Gov. Seymour, of Nov. 24th, that the reasons for non-action assigned by the Governor are different from those given in his letter of October 7, before quoted.

9

The views of the Association concerning the employment of Colored Troops were briefly presented to President Lincoln in a letter from Peter Cooper, and to the Secretary of War and others in the letters from the Secretary of the Association—which letters were as follows:—

Letter from Peter Cooper.

To His Excellency Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States:

Most Respected Sir: Since I last had the honor to address you in January, 1862, the courage, skill and perseverance manifested by you in your efforts to maintain and defend our union of States, with all their rightful authority and power, has commanded my heartfelt gratitude, confidence, and respect.

Your efforts to bring back the rebel States to accept the supremacy of the Constitution and the laws, with the general course of your Administration, have compelled me to believe that there is nothing that you have sought and desired so much, as to know and apply the best means to secure a lasting and honorable peace, and to overcome, with the least possible expense of life and treasure, a rebellion that embodies in itself the sum of all that is vile.

It would have been too much to expect from any human being that such a complication of difficulties and dangers as those you have encountered, should have been met and overcome without errors and mistakes as to the best means to restore peace to our country.

Our Union of States, which has from the commencement of the Government continued to spread its protecting shield over all the rights reserved to each of the individual States, can never be

abandoned to the despotism of Slavery, or the heresy of secession, while there is life and power to maintain and defend it.

In my letter I endeavored to show that nothing but the corrupting power of buying and selling human beings could ever so far demoralize a people as to cause them to deluge a nation in blood, in order to perpetuate an institution that enslaves thousands of their own children.

It must be apparent to all who desire the preservation of the Union, that the slaves who now cultivate the fields, and who perform a large portion of the mechanical labor of the South, are as much a power to be met and overcome as the rebel armies that are now doing their utmost to spread death and desolation over our country.

I believe with you, that it is impossible for a people who are determined to perpetuate Slavery at the expense of all the horrors of a civil war, to continue to hold slaves and live in peace with a Government having its foundation on the equal and inalienable rights of men.

In relation to the propriety of the *employment of negroes as a war measure or means to conquer the rebellion*, I fear the greatest mistakes of the war have been made.

It has taken time to educate the people to see and feel the absolute necessity of *attacking the rebellion in the only way by which it can be speedily and effectually overcome*, and at the same time extinguish a cause of national sorrow, demoralization, and disgrace.

You have with great propriety asked the question, "Why should negroes do anything for us if we will do nothing for them?" You have rightly said that "If they stake their lives for us they must be prompted by the strongest motives." The correctness and wisdom of that opinion cannot be called in question.

It is greatly to be deplored that the Government, and so many people of the North, with some of the officers of the army, have been so slow to perceive and adopt the only effectual means, which is *to use the negroes as a power by which this terrible war of rebellion can be put down*.

Those who have sympathized with rebels know their importance, and have uniformly raised a clamor against their use and every measure calculated to strengthen our own Government, or to strike the rebellion in its weakest place.

It is cause of astonishment to all who realize the fact that this desolating war is now carried on against us by less than one-third of the inhabitants of the United States. This is rendered still more astonishing when we remember that more than one-half of this one-third now left within the limit of

the rebel States are our friends, and have been at times ready and anxious to aid us so soon as their freedom and safety could be secured.

I believe that the war of rebellion would have been short, if, at the commencement 2 10 of the struggle, a decided policy in relation to the employment of negroes could have been adopted and sustained by the people of the North.

It should have been a policy promising freedom, protection, and a soldier's bounty to all able-bodied slaves of rebels who would enlist to defend the Union, the Constitution, and the laws which made us a nation. It should have been a policy defined by a proclamation, to be constantly kept before the people, setting forth the fact that the Government of the United States have been compelled, in the most reluctant self-defense, to adopt these measures, to meet in actual war those States now in open rebellion against all the rightful authority and power of the Nation, thereby forcing on the Government the painful necessity of using all means known in civilized warfare in order to put down a combination of wicked men who aim to destroy the Union and to build upon its ruins a Government where "property shall own labor," and of which the corner-stone shall be the enslavement of millions of human beings.

Our National Government, after having organized all the public lands into Territorial Governments, with the right to engraft slavery upon them all, whenever the people of any State shall so elect, and after passing by an almost unanimous vote in Congress a resolution declaring that the Government had no intention or desire to interfere with Slavery in any manner where it was then legally held, further demonstrates the sincerity of the Government, by proposed amendment to the Constitution, in order to put it forever out of the power of Congress to interfere with Slavery within the States.

All these efforts failed to satisfy the people of the South, whose present Vice-President, when in the Convention of Secessionists, defied their body to show a single act of the General Government that was intended to oppress or injure the people of the South, whose leading men had long before determined on a dissolution of the Union, for no better reason than the one stated by John C. Calhoun more than thirty years ago. He then said their system of slavery was an aristocratic system, and that they were an aristocratic people, and that so long as they could control the action of the General Government they would remain in it, but when they could not, they would break it up.

This they are now trying to do by any and all means in their power.

To prevent them from bringing upon our country and the world such a calamity, our Government will be fully justified in *holding out every inducement to slaves of rebels to join our army* to fight for their

freedom and independence. The policy of *employing the negroes in our defense*, if I am not mistaken, is demanded by the highest interests of the South as well as by the North.

I believe that ten years will not pass before the people of the South will erect monuments to commemorate their deliverance from the blight of Slavery.

They will verify the truth of what Homer declared two thousand six hundred years ago, when he said that

"Whatever day makes man a slave Takes half his worth away."

I, for one, envy not the man who, to save a nation's life, will not say: *Perish Slavery—perish all that stands in the way of maintaining the freedom and independence that our Union was intended to secure.*

Hoping that our Government will always contend for those measures best calculated to establish justice and promote the general welfare, I remain, with great respect, your friend,

PETER COOPER.

APPLICATION TO THE SECRETARY OF WAR.

Rooms of the New York Association for Colored Volunteers, 26 Pine Street, New York, Nov. 21, 1863.

Hon. Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War, Washington.

Sir: At a meeting of the General Committee of the New York Association for Colored Volunteers—an Association formed under the annexed call from Peter Cooper, General Sickles, and many other well-known citizens—it was *Resolved*:

That General W. K. Strong, late of the United States Army, be requested to telegraph to the War Department to know whether the President will authorize the enlistment of Colored Volunteers in this State, and *credit them on the quota of this State*, under the President's Proclamation for more volunteers in suppressing the rebellion.

This application to the National Government results from the refusal of certain State functionaries to recognize *colored* men in the call for *volunteers*, notwithstanding the fact that the President's Proclamation makes no discrimination in color, and the additional fact that that class of citizens are subject, like white men, to *a draft*.

The brevity of the time left for *volunteering*, and an earnest desire on our part to aid in reinforcing the National Armies at the earliest practicable moment, will probably furnish apology for this General Committee asking an early answer to the foregoing interrogatory.

By order of the New York Association for Colored Volunteers,

HENRY O'RIELLY, *Secretary*.

Memoranda concerning the Visit of Mr. James Rodgers to Albany, to learn the Views of Gov. Seymour about Colored Troops.

Rooms of the New York Association for Colored Volunteers, 26 Pine Street, New York, Nov. 23, 1863.

To all whom it may concern:

The "New York Association for Colored Volunteers," formed at a meeting in Clinton Hall, under a call from Peter Cooper, General Sickles, and seventy other prominent citizens—of which meeting General W. K. Strong was president—appointed a General Committee to promote enlistments for reinforcing our armies—of which Committee Mr. James Rodgers is a member.

Personally, and as a member of the Association, Mr. Rodgers feels so deeply interested in advancing the above-mentioned patriotic object, that he has volunteered his services to visit Albany, and ascertain, by another application, whether Governor Seymour will authorize the reception of Colored Volunteers. As the President's Proclamation for more volunteers makes no discrimination in the color of loyalists who are willing to volunteer in suppressing the rebellion, and as colored men are subject (like white men) to a draft, this General Committee trusts that no impediments will be thrown in the way of colored men who are willing to comply with the President's demand for volunteers, and thus share promptly in the toil and danger of sustaining our National Government in the battle-fields of the rebellion.

Justice and patriotism alike require that all men who are subject to *a draft*, shall have equal privileges in *volunteering* under the President's Proclamation for the public defence.

With these views and objects, and with a desire that our white fellow-citizens shall be measurably relieved from drafting, by allowing the colored citizens to volunteer for the war (in the course of which war the colored troops have evinced discipline and bravery worthy of the noble cause of national self-defence), this statement is written in evidence of the interest with which the mission of Mr. Rodgers to Albany is regarded by his fellow-citizens of the New York Association for Colored

Volunteers—which Association is now endeavoring to promote the formation of the First Division of New York Colored Troops.

By order of the General Committee of the said Association,

HENRY O'RIELLY, Secretary.

Establishment of the Policy in this State.

Having thus obtained from the National and State Governments distinct avowals of the policy which would control the enlistment of Colored Volunteers, attention was immediately turned towards the organization of a brigade of soldiers of African descent; and the result of a request to Colonel F. A. Conkling to allow his name to be presented to the President for a commission as Brigadier, to organize the troops thus to be raised, is stated in the following article:—

From the New York Tribune.

The Spirit of the Times.

The appearance of a colored regiment^{*} in a city where men (with women and children, too!) were recently hunted and murdered, under no other pretext than their sable hue, is a significant commentary on the progress of opinion and the march of loyal power.

* This refers to the Second Regiment of U. S. Colored Volunteers, which passed through New York to take shipping for New Orleans—about two-thirds of whom were recently slaves in Delaware, Maryland and Virginia.

Not less marked is the fact that an organization has been effected, under the auspices of many well-known citizens, whose names have already appeared in these columns, for sustaining the National Government in the policy of employing colored men as auxiliaries in defending our democratic institutions against the slaveholders' treason.

Some of the correspondence on these subjects may be useful in turning public attention more fully toward the importance of the policy now successfully inaugurated. A 12 letter from the Hon. Frederick A. Conkling, late Member of Congress, as well as Colonel of a gallant regiment—himself an early advocate of colored enlistments—may be taken, and so we print it, as a specimen of the hearty approbation bestowed on these movements by citizens who have signaled their zeal through efficient service, civil and military, against the rebellion. It seems that the General

Committee addressed Colonel Conkling to the effect that “his course in reference to the war had turned attention toward him for the command of a brigade,” and he was urged to “consent to be named to the War Department for authority to raise” such a force. This “Association for Colored Troops” includes several Generals and other officers who have deserved well of their country in the field. The following—creditable alike to his regiment and to himself—is Colonel Conckling's reply:

“ New York, Nov. 27, 1863.

“ Sir: I have received your letter of this date, proposing to me to raise a brigade of colored volunteers, and tendering me the recommendation of your Association for the command of such a brigade, and its influence in raising it. For this compliment to my small military experience, I beg you to accept my sincere acknowledgments. Nor can I let pass the opportunity to say that, having been among the first to advocate the raising of colored troops, my pride of opinion has been flattered by the extraordinary success of the measure, which I regard as fully established with the people—its popularity, no doubt, having been greatly quickened and intensified by the heroic bravery of the colored soldiers wherever they have come under fire, or have been ordered to charge upon the enemy in his intrenchments.

“The proposition, therefore, has an attraction for me which it is difficult to resist, but circumstances forbid me to accept it. It would perhaps seem like boasting or complaining, were I to detail to you the great pecuniary losses which I have sustained by reason of this rebellion, or the voluntary sacrifices which I have made to sustain the Government. I will only say that they compel me to give such attention to my private affairs as I am able to do and retain command of the regiment which I have raised, and to which I am much attached.

“May I say, in behalf of my regiment and myself, that we will be ready at twenty-four hours' notice, to march (as we have done before) to any position of actual service where we can be useful, provided that service be limited to a period not exceeding three months. More than this, a sense of individual responsibility and duty does not permit me for the present to promise.

“More than six months ago I tendered my services to other officers for the enlistment and organization of Colored Volunteers in this State; and I at that time addressed a communication to the Secretary of War upon the subject. I stand ready now, and shall at all times stand ready, to render that assistance.

“Faithfully yours, F. A. CONKLING.

“ Henry O'Rielly, Esq., Secretary N. Y. A. C. V.”

Colonel Dwight Morris, late acting Brigadier of a brigade including some New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut Volunteers, was then named as a proper commander for the proposed Brigade of Colored Volunteers—as follows:

Office of the New York “Association for Colored Volunteers,” New York, 26 Pine Street, Dec. 2, 1863.

To the Hon. Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War:

Sir: In your reply of Nov. 24 to our communication through General W. K. Strong, late of the United States Army, you state that you will grant authority to suitable persons to raise Colored Volunteers, in New York, to be credited on the quota of the State, and to be known as United States Volunteers—the officers to be commissioned by the President.

For the purpose of sustaining this policy of the Government, and to expedite the raising of such colored troops, the General Committee of this Association respectfully recommend that Colonel Dwight Morris, late of the Fourteenth Connecticut, be commissioned as Brigadier-General, and assigned to duty in this city and State. The Committee take pleasure in expressing the belief that this gentleman (who, as Acting Brigadier-General, commanding the 108th New York, the 12th New Jersey, the 14th Connecticut, and the 130th and 132d Pennsylvania, in several of the most important engagements of the war) is eminently qualified, by his views concerning the policy of enlisting colored troops, as well as by his military experience, to contribute largely to the success of the movement now inaugurated in this State for organizing a Brigade or 13 Division of Colored Volunteers; and therefore the undersigned present his name for such an appointment, now that his health, once greatly impaired in active service, is such as to permit him again to take the field in active operations.

Hoping that Colonel Morris may be thus appointed, and detailed as above requested, the Association pledges its most zealous efforts to aid in every practicable way in raising troops to fill the ranks of his command.

By order of the General Committee,

Henry O’Rielly, *Secretary*.

W. K. STRONG, *Chairman*.

The Secretary of War, when called on by some Senators in furtherance of this recommendation, replied substantially that Colonel Dwight Morris had just been nominated to the Senate for a

Brigadier's commission, and that he therefore could not be placed in such a command till his nomination should be approved by the Senate—Congress being then in session;—but that, when thus confirmed, “the assignment to the specific duty in New York would be made.” Secretary Stanton, in the meantime, offered to authorize Colonel Morris to raise a colored regiment in New York, with his then rank of colonel; but circumstances induced Colonel Morris to decline undertaking that duty at the time, in view of the pendency of his name for a brigadiership—though ready for service, as the Association suggested and as Secretary Stanton substantially approved, when decisive action should be had upon his nomination in the Senate.

Nomination of Col. Bartram.

In view of the foregoing facts, the General Committee of the Association for Colored Troops, having received strong testimonials in favor of Lieut.-Col. N. B. Bartram, of New York, an officer attached to the Eighth Regiment of Colored Troops, in camp near Philadelphia, and after an interview with that officer, resolved unanimously, on motion of Mr. O’Rielly, that the said Lieut.-Col. Bartram be nominated as Colonel for the command of the First Colored Regiment to be raised in the State of New York, inasmuch as he “appears to this Committee to combine the qualities and experience which eminently fit him for such a command.”

[The nomination of Col. Bartram was afterwards concurred in by the Joint Volunteering Committee of this Association and of the Union League Club, and he was accordingly appointed by the President.]

Course of the Union League Club.

The policy of the National Government concerning the enlistment of Colored Volunteers in this State having been thus announced by the letter of Secretary Stanton, in reply to the Association for Colored Troops (as above quoted,) the Union League Club, which had raised money to promote enlistments in a white regiment, determined to devote their means energetically in furthering the enlistment of Colored Volunteers.

Co-operation of the Association for Colored Volunteers with the Union League Club.

Under these circumstances, the “Association for Colored Volunteers” being informed that the “Union League Club” desired co-operation in raising the regiment of Colored Volunteers for which authority had been granted to that body by the General Government, resolved to accept the invitation and to co-operate cordially in the movement, being desirous of promoting, in every practicable way, all well-directed efforts for accomplishing the important objects for which the Association was organized. The invitation from the Club was as follows:—

50 Wall Street, New York, Dec. 5th, 1863.

General W. K. Strong, *Chairman*:

Sir: At a meeting of the Volunteering Committee of the Union League Club, the undersigned were appointed a committee to communicate with the body over which you preside, and to inform you that we have received an authorization from the Secretary of War to raise in this State a regiment of colored troops, to be known as the "Twentieth Regiment New York Colored Troops," and to solicit the co-operation of yourself and associates in raising the regiment.

Our Club has raised a considerable amount of funds, and can raise much more, if needed. We have no personal ends to answer—no officers for whom we desire to make places. We will gladly meet yourself and any members of your body at any time you may select. We believe that by a united effort of all interested in this matter, a creditable regiment can be promptly raised.

Your obedient servant, George Bliss, Jr.

Along with this letter, Colonel Bliss transmitted a resolution of the Union League Club, in the following words:—" *Resolved*, That the Committee of which General Wm. K. Strong is Chairman, be requested to appoint a sub-committee of three to confer with this Committee from time to time as invited by this Committee, and to represent that Committee."

As the correspondence between the Union League Club and the Governor and Secretary of War refers to a previous correspondence between Governor Seymour and Mr. James Rodgers, a member of the Association for Colored Troops, the letters from and replies to the Club are herewith printed:

The Committee of the Union League Club requested Governor Seymour to commission officers for the purpose of raising such regiment; provided they obtained the consent of the War Department for its organization. They received the following letter from the Governor:—

" State of New York, Executive Department, Albany, November 27th, 1863.

" Gentlemen: I have received your communication in relation to the organization of negro regiments into companies. The matter rests entirely with the War Department at Washington. I understand that permission has been given to persons in Brooklyn to raise such regiments, and I suppose, therefore, you can get a like authorization.

"I send you a copy of a letter written by me to Mr. Rodgers, of New York, which covers the whole ground of your communication."^{*}

* Governor Seymour's letter to Mr. Rodgers is inserted on a previous page, among the proceedings of the "Association for Colored Volunteers"—page. 8. See also Gov. Seymour's letter of October 7, on a previous page.

"Yours truly, Horatio Seymour.

"To Messrs. Alex. Van Rensselaer, L. G. B. Cannon, George Bliss, Jr."

The committee of the Club then forwarded the following letter to Washington, which we print, with the reply of the War Department:

"Hon. E. M. Stanton, *Secretary of War*:

"Dear Sir: On behalf of the Union League Club of this city we respectfully ask an authorization for a regiment of Colored Troops, to be raised in the State of New York, under the auspices of that Club. We have already made an application to His Excellency Governor Seymour, and have received a reply, of which we enclose a copy.

"The Union League Club is composed of over five hundred of the wealthiest and most respectable citizens of New York, whose sole bond of association is an unflinching determination to support the Government. They have subscribed a large sum, to be appropriated to the raising of a colored regiment, and will procure much more. They believe that by their exertions and influence they can, with the permission of the Government, put in the field a regiment worthy to stand side by side with the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts.

"If we are so fortunate as to receive your authorization, we shall take immediate steps to carry out our plan, and shall endeavor to present for approval able and experienced officers, whose heart is in the work.

"We are, very respectfully, your obedient servants,

Committee.

"Geo. Bliss, Jr,

" Le Grand B. Cannon,

Authority from the War Department.

" War Department, Adjutant-General's Office, Washington, D. C., December 3, 1863.

" George Bliss, Jr., Esq., *Union League Club Rooms, New York*:

" Sir: I am instructed by the Secretary of War to inform you that you are hereby authorized, as the representative of your associates of the Union League Club, to raise in the State of New York one regiment of infantry, to be composed of colored men, to be mustered into the service of the United States for three years or during the war. To these troops no bounties will be paid. They will receive ten dollars per month and one ration, three dollars of which monthly may be in clothing.

15

"The regiment will be known and designated as the Twentieth Regiment United States Colored Troops.

"The organization of the regiment must conform strictly to the requirements of General Orders No. 110, current series, War Department, a copy of which is herewith enclosed.

"The prescribed number of commissioned officers will be appointed by the President, after they shall have passed examination, as provided in the General Orders Nos. 143 and 144, War Department, 1863, copies of which are herewith enclosed, and your attention invited thereto. The officers so appointed will be mustered into service on the presentation to the mustering officer of their appointments, signed by the Secretary of War. The enlisted men may be mustered into service by squads, if found more convenient.

"The troops raised under the foregoing authority will rendezvous at Riker's Island, New York harbor, to which point they will be sent as fast as they are mustered into service. An officer will be assigned to duty at that post to take charge of the men on their arrival, and make the necessary requisitions for supplies.

"I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

" C. W. Foster, Assistant Adjutant-General."

In accordance with the invitation from the Union League Club Committee, a delegation from the Association for Colored Volunteers (consisting of General W. K. Strong and Messrs. Henry O'Rielly,

James Rodgers, Edward Cromwell, G. W. Rose, Jackson S. Schultz, and George Kessman) met with the Union League Volunteering Committee, at the Club House on Union Square—when a general plan of operations was agreed on. Immediately thereafter a committee of three (viz., Messrs. Schultz, Cromwell and Rodgers) was appointed to meet regularly with the Committee of the Union League Club—thus forming a General Volunteering Committee of Ten for promoting the objects which caused the formation of the “Association for Colored Volunteers.”

In furtherance of these arrangements, the following resolutions were adopted at a meeting of the General Committee of the “Association for Colored Volunteers:”

Resolved, That all agents now employed by this Association be excused from further service for this Association, inasmuch as the Committee of the Union League Club have assumed, or will assume, the employment of all such agents as that Committee may see fit to employ.

Resolved, That Jackson S. Schultz, Edward Cromwell, and James Rodgers be a committee, to act as invited by the Committee of the Union League Club, in reference to volunteering for the regiment of colored men now in progress of formation, as the Twentieth Regiment of United States Colored Volunteers.

Resolved, That a committee of three be appointed to look after the interests of Colored Volunteers; and that any complaints on that subject be referred to said committee—[which committee consisted of the three gentlemen appointed to meet and cooperate with the Volunteering Committee of the Union League Club.]

Resolved, That all the applications heretofore made to this Association for commands of Colored Troops be referred to the committee of three (Messrs. Schultz, Cromwell and Rodgers) appointed by this Association to co-operate with the Union League Club Committee, now engaged in the organization of the Twentieth Regiment United States Colored Volunteers, of which Colonel Bliss is chairman, and that all future applications of the same character be referred to the same committee.

Resolved, That among the persons named for command of a colored regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel N. B. Bartram, of this city, now Lieutenant-Colonel of the Fifth Regiment United States Colored Volunteers, in camp near Philadelphia, appears to this Committee to combine the qualities and experience which eminently fit him for such a command.

RESULTS OF THESE ARRANGEMENTS—THE FIRST COLORED TROOPS SENT FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK.

The satisfactory results of the movement cannot be more appropriately stated than by quoting certain articles from the New York *Times* and the New York *Tribune*. Even the New York *Express*, not remarkable for eulogy on the organization of Colored Troops, spoke with as much animation as the *Tribune* or *Times* concerning this movement. "The regiment," says the *Express*, "marched in column, by platoon, and their soldierlike appearance, the evenness of their dress, and the carriage of the muskets, justified 16 the praises bestowed on them, and gave evidence of close drill exercise since they enlisted." * * * "The ovation to the twentieth regiment of Colored Volunteers," the *Express* adds, "was one of the most imposing receptions which has ever honored the advent or departure of a military organization from New York."

From the Tribune of March 5, 1864.

TWENTIETH U. S. COLORED REGIMENT—RECEPTION BY THE UNION LEAGUE—SPEECHES OF CHARLES KING AND COLONEL BARTRAM—DEPARTURE FOR THE SEAT OF WAR.

The 20th Regiment United States Colored Troops left Riker's Island at 9 o'clock on Saturday morning, on board the steamer John Romer, and were conveyed to the foot of Twenty-sixth Street, East River, where they were disembarked and formed in regimental line, and marched to Union Square, arriving in front of the Union League Club-House at one o'clock.

A vast crowd of citizens of every shade of color, and every phase of social and political life, filled the square and streets, and every door, window, veranda, tree and house-top that commanded a view of the scene, was people with spectators. Over the entrance of the Club-Room was a large platform ornamented with flags and filled with ladies. In the street was another platform tastefully decorated and occupied by prominent citizens. From this stand the colors were presented by President King of Columbia College, who spoke as follows:

SPEECH OF CHARLES KING.

"I rejoice to see this day—I rejoice in the opportunity, beneath this glorious sun and in the presence of this goodly assembly, and under the folds of our ever dear, honored flag of the Union—to salute you, soldiers of the 20th Regiment U. S. Colored Troops, as fellow-countrymen, fellow soldiers, for, I, too, have in other days worn the uniform of the nation, and from my heart I honor it, and all who worthily wear it.

"I am proud of the opportunity to stand before you as the representative of the loyal women who have united in the patriotic purpose of presenting to you a regimental flag to be bore with the colors of the nation of which you are now the accepted and sworn defenders and guardians.

"These loyal women know and feel what such a ceremonial imports; they know and feel that the sacred banner which they commit to your faithfulness and courage, is a trust as full of difficulty and of danger as of duty; that it calls, on your part, for the hourly exercise of self-restraint, self-discipline, self-denial; for the implicit obedience without which an army is but a mob, and for that high and patriotic devotion which counts even life itself a willing sacrifice to the cause of country and of liberty. The religion of the flag is second only to the religion of the altar; and our Father in heaven may be implored to bless, according to its purity, the one and the other. Hence he who is false to his flag is false to his altar and his God.

"And these loyal women who thus confide to you a trust at once so dangerous and so honorable, they too—be assured of it—they will do all that may be done by careful ministration for the sick and the wounded, by systematic and considerate labors for the families of the soldier exposed to privation, to lighten the cares and gladden the hearts and strengthen the arms of those they encourage to go forth to battle.

"Go, then, soldiers of the Twentieth Regiment, go forth in the assured conviction that you leave behind you ever-watchful, ever-kind, ever-active friends, who, taking so prominent a part in equipping you for war, will in nowise falter in their efforts for the welfare of the families you leave behind.

"To these considerations, which may be fitly addressed to all soldiers, I desire to add some that belong to you alone. For, my friends—and I use the expression all the more emphatically that the same expression was, in the fatal month of July, employed by a very high functionary on a very different occasion and to a very different body of men—to each the choice of and responsibility for his own friends—in addressing you by this name I address soldiers of order, liberty, and law—men who came forth at the call of country and in vindication of her outraged constitution—nay, of the very right of national existence.

"To you, then, in addition the appeal suitable to every soldier, lies in a higher and holier sense, an appeal as emancipators of your own race, while acting as the defenders and champions of another. You are in arms, not for the freedom and law of the white race alone, but for universal law and freedom; for the God-implanted right of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness to every being whom He has fashioned in His own image. 17 When you put on the uniform and swear allegiance

to the standard of the Union, you stand emancipated, regenerated, and disenthralled—the peer of the proudest soldier in the land; and withered be the hand and palsied be the tongue that shall ever give consent to your being subject to other treatment at the hands of the enemy than such as is measured out to other soldiers of the Republic. Prejudice, indeed, and the rancorous hate of brutalized minds and the ingrained meanness of factious partisanship may still throw obstacles in your way, but that way is upward and onward, and your march in it cannot be stopped, cannot be much delayed, unless by your own want of faith and want of work. To your own selves be true to your high mission as the vindicators and asserters of your worth as men, and you cannot then be false to any one, or fail in any high and honorable endeavor. You may fall, as many of your race did fall with the gallant, good young Shaw at Wagner, and the ignoble foe thought to dishonor that youthful hero's grave by heaping into it the corpses of his colored soldiers. Dishonored! Who would not die such a death to be worthy of such a grave? Who that rightly feels would exchange that lowly resting place on the barren shore of South Carolina, lulled by the eternal requiem of the solemn sea, for the proudest mausoleum in the loftiest temple built with human hands?

“No, no, my friends, you cannot be hindered now in your high calling. It is but to look back for a few years—nay, but for a few months in this city—to realize what a forward step has been taken, and to feel quite sure that in such a path there is no step backward.

“On! on! then, soldiers of the 20th United States Colored Troops, with serried ranks, with faith in yourselves and in your cause, with confidence and affection for your officers, and with humble but earnest trust in God, and you will, you must, in contributing to the rescue of your country and its Constitution, work out your own complete redemption.

“Already the colored troops of the United States count by tens and twenties of thousands, and nowhere have they turned back from the bloodiest conflict or failed to follow their leaders into the very jaws of death.

“Dear Col. Bartram, to you and to the officers of this fine regiment it remains for me to say a few words:

“The flag which I hold in my hands, to be placed in yours, tells its own story. The conquering eagle and the broken yoke and the armed figure of liberty speak as plainly as symbols can of the might of Freedom and the overthrow of Slavery—and flying, as will this standard-sheet, beside the Stars and Stripes of the Republic, they will form a spell of such power as to bind up every generous heart with one firm, fierce resolve that these flags shall not be separated—shall not be surrendered—but shall go marching on, and marching on, and still marching on to triumph and final victory!

"In the faith, Colonel, that such is your resolve, I commit to your hands, for the 20th Regiment United States Colored Troops, in the name of those loyal women, the flag they have prepared. May the blessing of God go with it, and with you and your soldiers, and fighting beneath its folds, may He cover your heads in the day of battle!"

At the close of his speech, President King read the following address, which had been prepared by H. T. Tuckerman. The address was neatly engrossed on parchment, and signed by the ladies who presented the colors to the regiment.

To the Officers and Men of the Twentieth United States Colored Troops:

Soldiers: We, the mothers, wives, and sisters of the members of the New York Union League Club, of whose liberality and intelligent patriotism, and under whose direct auspices, you have been organized into a body of national troops for the defense of the Union, earnestly sympathizing in the great cause of American free nationality, and desirous of testifying, by some memorial, our profound sense of the sacred object and the holy cause in behalf of which you have enlisted, have prepared for you this banner, at once the emblem of freedom and of faith, and the symbol of woman's best wishes and prayers for our common country, and especially for your devotion thereto.

When you look at this flag and rush to battle, or stand at guard beneath its sublime motto, " God and Liberty! " remember that it is also an emblem of love and honor from the daughters of this great metropolis to her brave champions in the field, and that they will anxiously watch your career, glorifying in your heroism, ministering to you when wounded and ill, and honoring your martyrdom with benedictions and with tears.

Mrs. J. J. Astor, Mrs. G. W. Blunt, Mrs. J. W. Beekman, Mrs. S. Wetmore, Mrs. S. B. Chittenden, Mrs. G. Bliss, jr., Mrs. S. J. Bacon, Mrs. R. B. Minturn, Mrs. Charles 3 18 King, Mrs. S. W. Bridgham, Mrs. W. E. Dodge, Mrs. R. Stebbins, Mrs. B. Schieffelin, Miss King, Mrs. J. B. Johnston, Mrs. N. D. Smith, Mrs. T. M. Cheeseman, Mrs. H. A. Colt, Mrs. A. T. Mann, Mrs. J. J. Phelps, Mrs. G. B. Deforest, Mrs. Le G. B. Cannon, Mrs. W. A. Butler, Mrs. N. A. Burdock, Mrs. L. Dunlap, Mrs. T. E. Howe, Mrs. W. H. Lee, Mrs. W. E. Dodge, jr., Mrs. David Hoadley, Mrs. C. Ludington, Mrs. G. Lemist, Mrs. E. C. Cowden, Mrs. J. A. Roosevelt, Mrs. J. Sampson, Mrs. R. B. Minturn, jr., Mrs. Alfred Pelt, jr., Mrs. W. Hatchings, Mrs. Geo. Opdyke, Mrs. G. C. Ward, Mrs. C. G. Judson, Mrs. S. W. Roosevelt, Mrs. E. D. Smith, Mrs. S. Gandy, Mrs. R. L. Stuart, Mrs. E. W. Stoughton, Mrs. J. W. Bigelow, Mrs. M. O. Roberts, Mrs. H. K. Bogart, Mrs. E. C. Hall, Mrs. J. Le Roy, Mrs. J. Brown, Mrs. H. Baldwin, Mrs. M. Clarkson, Mrs. J. O. Stone, Mrs. J. G. King, jr., Mrs. H. Van Rennsselaer, Mrs. J. A. King, jr., Mrs. J. C. Cassegree, Mrs. J. L. Kennedy, Mrs. F. Prime, Mrs. Barnwall, Mrs. Wheelwright, Mrs. E. Collins, Mrs. Bradish, Mrs. Bruce, Mrs. Tuckerman, Mrs.

Shaw, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. P. Richards, Mrs. R. Winthrop, Mrs. Weeks, Mrs. Jaques, Mrs. A. Brooks, Mrs. W. Felt, Mrs. J. W. Goddard, Mrs. F. G. Shaw, Mrs. R. G. Shaw, Mrs. G. B. Curtiss, Mrs. R. C. Lovell, Mrs. C. G. Kirkland, Mrs. B. De Forest, Mrs. Boerum, Mrs. Hamilton Fish, Mrs. Alfred Pell, Mrs. Kennedy, Mrs. J. Johnston, Mrs. T. L. Beekman, Mrs. J. F. Gray, Mrs. J. Tuckerman, Mrs. F. A. Whittaker, Mrs. J. H. Macy, Mrs. F. H. Macy, Mrs. J. McKaye, Mrs. W. L. Felt, Mrs. T. Haskell, Mrs. Isaac Ames, Mrs. L. F. Warner, Mrs. A. G. Phelps, Mrs. N. Chandler, Mrs. H. Potter, Mrs. P. S. Van Rennselaer, Mrs. H. G. Thomson, Mrs. F. C. Pendexter, Mrs. H. G. Chapman, Mrs. G. Bancroft, Mrs. M. K. Jessup, Mrs. J. C. B. Davis, Mrs. W. H. Schieffelin, Mrs. C. C. Dodge, Mrs. John Jay, Mrs. E. M. Young, Mrs. J. T. Schultz, Mrs. J. E. Brenly, Mrs. H. Chauncy, Mrs. R. M. Hunt, Miss Jones, Mrs. J. Schieffelin, Miss Fish, Miss Jay, Miss Anna Jay, Miss Young, Miss Schultz, Miss Russell, Miss J. M. King, Miss Cochrane, Mrs. Vincent Colyer, Mrs. Catherine C. Hunt, Mrs. Walter, Mrs. Catherine Williams, Mrs. Emily H. Chauncey, Mrs. E. W. Cruger, Mrs. W. C. Bryant, Mrs. F. B. Godwin, Mrs. Emily Boerum, Miss Norsworthy, Messrs. H. G. Chapman, Ira Brenly, Peter Marié, C. Berryman, C. De P. Field, C. H. Tuckerman, C. A. Heckscher, E. Schieffelin, B. N. Field, L. Schieffelin, D. J. Clark, W. H. Schieffelin, Wadsworth, S. A. Schieffelin, R. H. Hunt, B. W. Griswold.

Colonel Bartram, who received the flags, made the following response:

“ Ladies and Gentlemen: I feel how utterly unable I am to respond in a becoming manner to the eloquent addresses just pronounced. While free to confess my deficiency in this respect, I yet claim for myself and my command an equal share of the patriotic ardor and love of country. In that we yield to none. [Applause.] This beautiful banner symbolizes our country. It is this that makes death glorious beneath its starry fields— it is this that rouses the feelings of outraged honor when we see it trailed in the dust. How base, and how dead to all sense of honor, must that wretch be whose brow burns not with shame and rage at the dishonor of the flag of his country. [Applause.] Nearly three years since, the country was shocked by the spectacle of a band of traitors tearing away the emblem of our country from a fortress over which it had floated proudly for years, and substituting in its place a miserable device of their own. Has this act been fully avenged? No! The punishment for it has undoubtedly been great already, but I trust that the utter humiliation and discomfiture which it deserves, are about to follow. To this end this regiment is about to take the field—a regiment composed of a race hitherto despised—of a race almost hopelessly sunk in degradation, by a system of slavery as barbarous as it is unjust. It has been the habit of those among us who sympathize with the traitors now in arms against us to sneer at what they are pleased to term the cowardice of the negro. I hope that Port Hudson, Fort Wagner and Olustee have forever settled this question. In this regard, I must be permitted to refer briefly to the conduct of the Eighth United States Colored Troops, in the last-mentioned action. My reason for doing this is, that for some three or four months I was on duty with this regiment, as its Lieutenant-Colonel, and during this period I had ample

opportunity to become thoroughly acquainted with its officers and the material composing its rank and file. No regiment ever went to the field better officered than the Eighth, and no regiment ever contained a braver or more resolute set of men. How well they fought is shown by their list of casualties; and although a subordinate officer in a battery thought it a misfortune to be supported by a colored regiment, yet, when we bear in mind that two veteran regiments had already found the position too hot and had retired, I think we can afford to forgive the slander, and say that the misfortune, if mis-fortune there was, was not in having a colored regiment for a support, but in having an 19 officer in the service of the United States so biased, so ungenerous, so cowardly, as to slander the brave men who fell around his guns. [Applause.] I should feel recreant to my duty to an old companion in arms, who has laid down his life upon the altar of his country, did I permit this occasion to pass without paying this slight tribute to his memory. [The allusion is to Col. Fribley, of the 8th U. S. Colored Volunteers, who fell at Olustee, and who cordially recommended that Bartram, his Lieut.-Colonel, should be appointed Colonel of this (20th) Regiment of U. S. Colored Troops.]

"I trust that when the time comes for the 20th to go into action, we shall behave ourselves in a manner that will reflect credit upon ourselves and honor upon our friends and our country. We feel that we have the sympathies and prayers of good men and women. We know the interest you feel in us—the high hopes you entertain—and believe me when I say that it is the determination of every officer and man of my command that, so far as the power to fulfill in them lies, you shall not be disappointed. I would that I could command appropriate words to address the noble women to whom we are indebted for this beautiful stand of colors. Will you accept a soldier's thanks, and his pledges that they shall never know dishonor while strength remains to wield a weapon in their defense?"

At the conclusion of his remarks he was greeted with enthusiastic cheers; then followed cheers for his officers and cheers for his men, and before he mounted his beautiful steed, some one presented him with a handsome boquet. The following letter was received from Gen. Dix:

Headquarters Department of the East, New York City, March 5, 1864.

To the Committee for the Reception of the Twentieth United States Colored Regiment.

Gentlemen: I much regret that official engagements at my headquarters will not permit me to attend the flag presentation to the regiment. It will carry with it to the field my cordial wishes for its success, and the assurance that the alacrity with which the colored classes in this State are coming forward to co-operate in putting down the Rebellion will secure, as it deserves, the lasting gratitude of the country.

I am truly yours, John A. Dix, Major-General.

THE COLLATION AT THE SQUARE.

After the presentation ceremony was over, the men stacked arms, and partook of a collation provided for them. Corpulent cans of coffee and fat baskets of sandwiches were carried into the square, and their contents generously distributed among the sable soldiers. They ate heartily, and were not backward in expressing their sentiments in relation to the reception they had met. "This is what we get for being soldiers." "If Uncle Sam treats us in this way, we should like to board with him." "Hurrah for the Committee." "This doesn't look like July." "How are you, rioters!" "Three cheers for the ladies." "That flag is a big thing, boys." "We'll show the Copperheads what we can do for freedom when we get a chance." "That was a jolly speech made by our Colonel." "Didn't Professor King talk like a book," &c. We might fill a column with the remarks made by these men during the few minutes allowed for lunch, showing their appreciation of the ovation which had been tendered to them, and the great advancement made in public opinion in regard to their race.

After luncheon, march was resumed in the following order:

THE PROCESSION.

Police Superintendent Kennedy.

One Hundred Policemen.

Members of the Union League Club.

Colored Friends of the Recruits, marching with hands joined.

Governor's Island Band.

The 20th Regiment United States Colored Troops.

The line of march was down Broadway to Canal street, through Canal street to the North River, where they embarked on board the Ericsson for New Orleans. The men made a fine appearance in their blue uniform, white gloves and white leggings. They are hearty and athletic fellows, many of them six feet tall, straight, and symmetrical. A majority of them are black; indeed there are but few mulattoes among them. The 20th is emphatically an African regiment, and to its credit be it spoken,

not one of its members disobeyed orders, no one broke ranks to greet enthusiastic friends, no one used intoxicating drinks to excess, no one manifested the least inclination to leave the service, and their marching was very creditable.

20

The march was truly a magnificent demonstration and a triumphant sign to progress. One thousand men with black skins, whose color has been a crime in the eyes of multitudes of white, marched without molestation from the wharf where they landed, through Twenty-sixth Street, the Fifth Avenue, Lexington Avenue, Madison Avenue, and Broadway. The doors, windows and balconies of our city palaces were thronged with aristocratic spectators, the ladies waving handkerchiefs, and the men cheering.

Seven months ago, the homes of these soldiers were attacked by rioters, who burned their dwellings, stole their property, and made the streets smoke with the blood of their unoffending relatives and friends.

On the 9th of July, Mr. Geo. W. Blunt met with other gentlemen, at the New England Rooms, and *advised Governor Andrew not to send the 55th Massachusetts Colored Regiment through this city, on their way to the seat of war, because the lives of colored women and children here would be endangered.* On Saturday Mr. Blunt marched with other members of the club in the van of the grand procession, and saw no signs of that hatred of the black race which has been such a stigma of shame to our city and nation.

THE TWENTY-SIXTH REGIMENT U. S. COLORED TROOPS.

Presentation of Colors—Speech of John Jay, Esq.—Reply of Col. Silliman—Departure of the Regiment.

The 26th Regiment United States Colored Troops broke camp at Riker's Island at an early hour yesterday morning, and came by barges to the foot of Warren street, North River, where they embarked on board the steamer Warrior. The proposed parade of Saturday being unavoidably postponed on account of the weather, they were met by a committee of the Union League Club, and an elegant stand of colors was presented to them, on behalf of the ladies of New York, by the Hon. John Jay. Mr. Jay accompanied the presentation by the following chaste address:

Soldiers of the 26th Regiment of United States Colored Troops: On behalf of the ladies of New York, who have prepared for you a stand of colors, I offer you a cordial greeting and a hearty God-speed!

They had hoped, in common with tens of thousands of our fellow-citizens, to greet you in person yesterday. This, to their exceeding disappointment, the storm prevented. The arrangement of the

Government and the needs of the country require you to depart to-day. We, therefore, come on this beautiful Easter morning, consecrated to faith and hope, to give you, as you depart on your sacred mission of high duty, our kind farewell. We greet you as Christians for ages have greeted each other on this sacred anniversary of Christ's Resurrection. We invoke for you the favor and protection of our risen Lord triumphant over sin and death.

The President has called upon you to unite with your fellow-citizens in defending the integrity, the supremacy, and the honor of our country.

Trusting implicitly to the National Faith, which the President, as Commander-in-Chief of the Army of the United States, has solemnly pledged in public Proclamations, you have promptly responded to that call; and without doubt, hesitation, or condition, you offer your lives for the defense of our common country and our common freedom. Organized by the National authority, you are henceforth a permanent part of the army of the Republic.

Already have thousands of your race, suddenly elevated from a condition of bondage, faced the Rebel cannon and sharp-shooters at Vicksburg, Port Hudson, Fort Wagner, Milliken's Bend, and other battle-fields of the South, with a heroism that has extorted the admiration and the gratitude of the American people. They have vindicated, by the highest ordeal, the right and capacity of their race to share with us the blessings which they have assisted to secure for the Nation.

To-day you go forth from home, family and friends to emulate their bright example, and to do bravely, with God's help, your part in the great contest.

Your going, enables a thousand citizens of New York, liable to military service, to remain at home; and you leave behind you those who will watch with interest every onward step in your career, and who will remember you constantly in their prayers.

If you return, as God grant many of you may, crowned with glory and victory, you will receive the warm welcome due to your patriotism and valor; and if you fall, as fall you may, your memories will be fondly cherished with those of the noble-hearted who have died for their country.

[The speaker here read the address of the ladies of the City of New-York, accompanying 21 the flag. As it is in the same terms, and from the same ladies as in the case of the 20th regiment, we do not repeat it.] Mr. Jay continued:

Colonel Silliman: In the names of these ladies and at the request of the Committee on Volunteering of the Union League Club, to whom the country is indebted for this second regiment organized by their efforts, I have the honor to present to you this stand of colors.

Your heroic conduct on the hard fought field of Gettysburg, and at Chancellorsville, where you saved the colors of the 124th New York, and brought out but a remnant of your command, assures us that we could not intrust them to worthier hands.

Our Republican system, which again you go forth to maintain, while it demands our highest loyalty to the Constitutional Government of the American people, and makes the preservation of their National sovereignty the first duty of the American citizen, teaches us also the lesson which we early learn and never forget, of pride, regard, and affection for our respective States. While, then, with your gallant officers and brave men, you follow the flag of our country and defend it with your lives, this standard will remind you, whether in camp, on the march, or on the battle-field, of your connection with New York, and of the names of her citizens who bid you an affectionate farewell.

Remember, Colonel, and let every officer and man in your regiment remember, that when the story of your prowess is told by the daily press or on the page of history, this metropolis will share your triumph, and the Empire State count you proudly among her sons.

Already has New York a record in this war of which her children may well be proud, even while they mourn her heroic dead—Ellsworth, Corcoran, Zook, Chapin, Smith, Preissner, Sherill, Cowles, and all the unnumbered heroes who have fallen in the nation's cause.

We offer to you, Colonel, the banner in its fresh silken beauty, the emblem of a constellation that is for the moment dim, and of a Union that seems somewhat shaken. Bring it to us again—tattered, it may be, and stained with the life-blood of your brave soldiers; but bring it, the emblem of a nationality unbroken, of a sovereignty unimpaired, of a territory undiminished—the emblem of a Republic united and supreme, from which, though the stripes will have vanished, no star shall be missing.

The voice of Mr. Jay rang out clear and full upon the Sabbath air, and the free winds waved the new colors, while an unclouded sky crowned the picture.

Col. Silliman replied briefly and to the point:

Sir: The soldiers of the 26th Regiment thank you for your good words and kind wishes, and I can ask only that we may realize your highest hopes of us.

What you have said of the men I believe is God's truth, and it will be the proudest day of my life when I can show their battle line to the traitor foe, and tell them: There are they that hunt for fugitive slaves; let them each find his man.

For myself, I feel that what a man has been is nothing to what he may yet be, and by the latter I will strive to merit the honor so heaped upon me here to-day.

Fair ladies, I cannot tell you how dear to us will be this banner, the gift of loyal women of the North. We love it, not chiefly for its rare and costly beauty, but for what is beyond all price, and more glorious than beauty. It is the emblem of our faith in all of this life which is worth living for. It is to us the symbol of redemption from bondage, differing from that which is eternal only in discharge by death, and as Christians love the cross, so we love our country's flag.

We thank you for your generous gift, and, as soldiers, we have sworn to love, honor and defend it with our lives.

After the reply of Col. Silliman, Vincent Colyer, Esq., the General Superintendent, came forward with a beautiful blue silk banner, trimmed with gold, on which were inscribed the words, "Unconditional Loyalty," and on behalf of the following named Benevolent Societies of Colored men of the city of New York, which were to have acted as an escort on Saturday, had not the storm prevented, in a few brief and eloquent words wished the soldiers a God-speed. Mr. Colyer then presented, through the Chaplain, a handsome satin rosette and badge, with the words "Unconditional Loyalty to God and our Country—to the soldiers of the 26th United States Colored Troops—from their friends."

The following is the list of Benevolent Societies contributing: African Civilization Society, 50 men; Freedman's Aid Society, 50 men, Stewart Benevolent Association, 22 306 men; Chelsea Musical Club, 40 men, Coachman's Society, 175 men; Union Sons of Barney, 75 men; Irving Hall Club, 40 men; Metropolitan Union League Club, 50 men; Shore Cadets, 120 men; Hannibal Benevolent Association, 175 men; African Society for Mutual Relief, 25 men; Odd Fellows' Lodges, 300 men; Congregation from Brooklyn (Mr. Williams,) 50 men. Total, 1,450.

The presentation scene was truly grand and imposing. The wharves and neighboring vessels were peopled with spectators. On the decks of the Warrior were a number of elegantly dressed ladies, several members of the Loyal Union Club, the tall symmetrical form of the gallant Colonel, the black and comely Chaplain, and the whole regiment of stalwart negro soldiers.

Thirty-first Regiment U. S. Colored Troops.

From 200 to 300 men are already enlisted for the 3d Colored Regiment from this State, known as the Thirty-first Regiment United States Colored Troops.

[It is estimated that probably two thousand colored men from the State of New York enlisted in the Massachusetts, Connecticut, and other Regiments, while the question of Colored Enlistments was in suspense in this State.]

The Colored Troops—Honorable Testimonials from the Army.

From the New York Tribune.

Nothing in the whole course of the great Rebellion is more remarkable than the manner in which the colored race has falsified the assertions of the Secessionists and their Copperhead sympathizers.

While the records reek with details of Rebel atrocities during these three years of warfare, where is now the evidence of outrage perpetrated by negroes upon their late masters or their families? And where is the dastard that dare now impugn the courage with which the colored soldiers have met the brunt of battle? Even in the late Florida campaign, where some of the blame was at first recklessly thrown by Copperheads upon the colored troops, the courage and steadiness of the negro brigade actually furnish prominent redeeming features of the disastrous enterprise.

As a part, and a most important part, of the annals of the times, it may be stated that never in the history of mankind, has a great social and political convulsion been attended with traits more creditable to a down-trodden race, than the moderation and the bravery which have now characterized the "men of African descent," under circumstances signally calculated to arouse the vengeance and test the courage and other qualities of the oppressed.

The cheerful labor and the unswerving fidelity of the colored population are receiving proper acknowledgement on all hands from persons who have had ample opportunities for witnessing the course of events wherever negro industry is required on abandoned plantations, or wherever negro aid is invoked for guidance to the loyal troops in regions where the white man must largely depend on negro sagacity and fidelity in counteracting Rebel hostilities.

And it is truly honorable to the loyal white soldiery, that, scorning the wretched prejudices and calumnies against the colored race, the testimony from the Army is now alike unanimous and enthusiastic in praising the qualities shown by the sable troops while discharging the duties of the camp and the march, and amid the trials of the battle-field.

On these latter points, a couple of letters copied from among the testimonials collected during the researches of the "New-York Association for Colored Troops," may be taken as fair specimens of the replies elicited by the inquiries instituted by that Association, through Col. Charles W. Darling, one of its members:

From Col. John A. Foster, of the 175th Regiment, N. Y. V.

" Washington, Jan. 23, 1864.

" Col. Darling — *Dear Sir:* In accordance with your request, I will briefly state my experience in the employment of negro soldiers.

"While before Port Hudson, during the siege of that place, I was acting on Col. Gooding's staff, prior to the arrival of my regiment at that place. On the assault of May 27, Col. Gooding was ordered to proceed to the extreme right of our lines, and oversee the charge of the two regiments constituting the negro brigade, and I accompanied him.

"We witnessed them in line-of-battle, under a very heavy fire of musketry and siege and field pieces. There was a deep gully or bayou before them, which they could not cross nor ford in the presence of the enemy, and hence an assault was wholly impracticable. Yet they made five several attempts to swim and cross it, preparatory to an assault on the enemy's works, and this, too, in fair view of the enemy, and at short musket range. Added to this, the nature of the enemy's works was such, that it allowed an enfilading fire. *Success was impossible*; yet they behaved as cool as if veterans, and when ordered to retire, marched off as if on parade. I feel satisfied that, if the position of the bayou had been known, and the assault made a quarter of a mile to the left of where it was, the place would have been taken by this negro brigade on that day.

"On that day I witnessed the attack made by the divisions of Gens. Grover and Paine, and can truly say I saw no steadier fighting by those daring men than did the negroes in *this their first fight*.

"On the second assault, June 14, in the assault made by Gen. Paine's Division, our loss was very great in wounded; and, as there was a want of ambulance men, I ordered about a hundred negroes, who were standing idle and unarmed, to take the stretchers and carry the wounded from the field. Under a most severe fire of musketry and grape and canister, they performed this duty with unflinching courage and nonchalance. They suffered severely in this duty, both in killed and wounded; yet, not a man faltered. These men had *just been recruited*, and were not even partially disciplined. But one

man showed any fear, and he *their white officer*. Much of their coolness was due to a captain with them, who was always foremost in his duty.

"I next saw the negroes (engineers) working in the trenches, under a heavy fire of the enemy. They worked faithfully, and wholly regardless of exposure to the enemy's fire.

"After the siege was over, and the new regiments recruited, I had frequent opportunities to see the regiments, and was peculiarly struck with their neatness and general soldier-like bearing. They always were clean and neat—their arms and accoutrements in perfect order—and this in a higher degree than their white fellow-soldiers.

"The chief difficulty in the way of having them as effective as they can be rendered, will be in the selection of officers. Although the Department strives to have none but those of the highest qualifications, yet, even then, rough and severe brutal officers are to be found in command over them. I have had repeated instances of absolute brutality told me by persons who have witnessed it. In my opinion, some remedy is required more than is now furnished by the Army Regulations: for the negro knows not where or to whom to apply for redress, and in fact is generally ignorant that he can obtain any redress.

"I remain, yours, truly, " John A. Foster, Col. 175th Regiment, N. Y. V."

Statements Authorized by Gen. Graham.

" Headquarters Naval Brigade, "Department of Virginia and North Carolina, "Norfolk, Va., Feb. 22, 1864.

" Colonel: Gen. Graham duly received your favor of the 11th inst., requesting such facts as have come within his knowledge relative to the efficiency of Colored Troops. At the General's desire, I have collected what information I could obtain here on the subject.

"Gen. Graham has never personally commanded Colored Troops; but, from observation and conversation with officers who have, he entertains a very favorable opinion of their qualifications in the field.

"They are excellent horsemen, and consequently excel in the cavalry service. They possess strong imitative powers, which readily enable them to acquire a proficiency in drill—conform willingly to habits of discipline and obedience—and, above all, are stimulated by the motive of emulating the example of their white comrades in arms.

"They present a soldierly appearance on parade—are inured to privation and fatigue, and, in the estimation of those who have witnessed their conduct under fire, exhibit a coolness, courage and enthusiasm worthy of the highest commendation.

"Unquestionably, they will prove a valuable acquisition to our armies—nerved as they are by every incentive which stimulates men to endeavor.

"Mr. Thomas Jackson, Superintendent of the First Sub-District of Virginia, has kindly furnished me with the following facts:

"In reply to your inquiry as to the proved capacity of colored men as soldiers, I can only, so far as field service, give the testimony of those who have had opportunities of seeing them on the march and in presence of the enemy. There, all agree that as soldiers, colored men come fully up to the expectations of their warmest friends.

24

"In my sub-district, where, during the last summer and fall, the noted partisan ranger, Burroughs, kept up constant excitement, there are a number of farms lying outside of the intrenched lines around Norfolk and Portsmouth; and, as protection against incursions, the able-bodied black men on these farms were enrolled as a Home Guard, and placed under the charge of an officer of the 21st Connecticut Volunteers.

"After a day's work, those men met for drill one hour daily, and their progress was surprising. These men stood regular sentry every night, during all weathers, though indifferently clad; and not one case occurred of absence from post or neglect of duty; their error, if any, being too literal a construction of orders, much to the disgust of the Virginia chivalry.

"When volunteers were called for, almost every man so drilled offered himself for enlistment, without any inducement or bounty, except the promised support of his family during his term of service, thus evincing a true patriotism.'

"The regiments of colored troops raised in this district of the Department of Virginia and North Carolina are as follows: The 2d, 4th, 5th, 6th, 10th, 36th and 38th U. S. Colored troops, and also the 2d Regiment of cavalry.

"The 36th Regiment, Col. Draper, did more to break up roving bands of rebels in this district, than any regiment of white troops—not the least notable of its exploits being the capture of Burroughs, the guerrilla, at his chosen place of safety on Knot Island. During this expedition, and on subsequent

scouts, as far as Currituck Court-House, nothing could be better than their endurance in marching and rapidity of movement.

"During the expedition last October, to Charles City Court-House, on the Peninsula, the 4th Regiment marched steadily through storm and mud, and, on coming up with the enemy, behaved as bravely under fire as veterans. An officer of the 1st N. Y. Mounted Rifles—a most bitter opponent and reviler of Colored troops—who was engaged in this affair, *volunteered* the statement that they had fought bravely, and, in his own language, more expressive than elegant, were 'bully boys'—which, coming from such a source, might be regarded as the highest praise.

"It would thus seem that, among friends and foes, there is but one sentiment on the subject of the capacity of colored soldiers.

"During the recent advance toward Richmond, to liberate the Union prisoners, the 4th, 5th, and 9th Regiments formed part of the expedition, and behaved splendidly. They marched thirty miles in ten hours, and an unusually small number straggled on the route. Their skirmishing in face of the enemy was said to be excellent.

"As scouts they are invaluable, having an extraordinary facility for gaining secret intelligence. Wherever they go, they find friends of their own color, whose interests are identical with theirs, and they can thus acquire information where the most acute white man would fail.

"As guides, their good qualities are acknowledged on every hand.

"As laborers for engineering purposes, their usefulness is evident, particularly in southern latitudes.

"One incident deserves mention. When General Wild was threatened at North-West Landing, a part of his command (colored), which had been directed to proceed slowly on account of being footsore—their pace not to exceed four miles per day—marched eighteen miles in seven hours to his support with alacrity, expecting to meet the enemy, and eager for the fray.

"A strong point in their favor is the complete absence of revengeful feelings toward their late masters, so that the cry of 'St. Domingo massacre' is without the slightest foundation.

"Hoping that the above information will prove serviceable for the purposes of the "Association.

"I am truly yours, " D. Graham Adee.

"Col. Charles W. Darling. "

Such testimonials must be peculiarly gratifying to all loyal people who have encouraged the organization of Colored Troops in this State, to one of the regiments of which troops (the 20th) a stand of colors will be presented this day at Union square, near where sundry sable citizens were massacred last summer, for the crime, in Copperhead eyes, of appearing in the color bestowed by the Almighty.

SERVICES OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON VOLUNTEERING,

This brief record cannot be concluded without an expression of hearty thankfulness towards the excellent "Committee on Volunteering," which superintended the organization of the Colored Troops in the City of New York. That Committee consists of the following gentlemen:

Alexander Van Rensselaer, Charles P. Kirkland, Legrand B. Cannon, James A. Roosevelt, Sherman J. Bacon, Elliot C. Cowdin, and George Bliss, Jr.—on behalf of the "*Union League Club*."

And Jackson S. Schultz, Edward Cromwell, and James Rodgers—on behalf of the "*New York Association for Colored Volunteers*."